BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

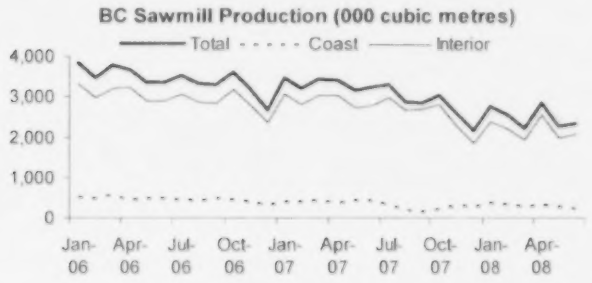
BC Stats

Data Services
(250) 387-0327
BC.Stats@gov.bc.ca
September 25, 2008
Issue: 08-09

Current Statistics ◆ September 2008

- **Sawmills and planing mills in the province produced 28.1% less lumber this June than in the same month last year.** Mills in the Interior slowed their output by 25.5%, while production at coastal mills was down even more substantially (-44.9%). Canadian lumber production tumbled 24.7%, as both BC and Quebec (-15.1%) posted big declines. Year-to-date, BC sawmills have accounted for over half (51%) of the lumber production in Canada.

Data Source: Statistics Canada



- **British Columbia's unemployment rate inched down again in August, falling to 4.3% (*seasonally adjusted*).** The latest decline in the jobless rate was largely due to a slight contraction of the labour force (-0.1%, or -2,800 people). Employment was virtually unchanged (+0.0%) from July.

More men (+1.1%, *seasonally adjusted*), but fewer women (-1.2%) in BC were working in August. The number of men with jobs has been increasing since the beginning of the summer, as most of the recent job growth has occurred in goods industries which traditionally employ more men than women.

There were fewer full-time (-1.0%), but more part-time (+4.5%) jobs available, and the number of self-employed workers increased significantly (+2.4%) for a third straight month. However, public sector employment was down 2.5%.

The youth unemployment rate rose to 8.2%, while the jobless rate for those aged 25 and over fell 0.3 percentage points to 3.5%.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **The value of BC origin exports stalled (-3.1% *seasonally adjusted*) in July, following three consecutive months of increases.** Energy exports declined 5.8%, reflecting the effect of lower export prices for gasoline. Shipments of industrial & consumer (-9.4%) and agriculture & fishing (-3.0%) products were also down from June. However, forestry (+4.0%) and machinery & equipment (+0.6%) exports showed more promise. Exports to the US were off 4.1%, as shipments of energy (-16.1%), agriculture & fish (-4.5%) and machinery & equipment (-2.1%) all slipped. Increases in exports of forestry (+1.3%), and industrial & consumer products (+4.3%) south of the border were unable to offset the declines. Shipments to destinations other than the US fell 2.0%, largely because of a sharp downturn in exports of industrial & consumer (+20.7%) products.

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

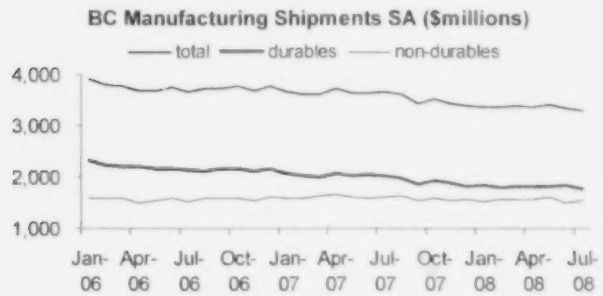
- **Housing starts in the province showed continued volatility in August, falling 10.5% (*seasonally adjusted*), more than reversing a 4.8% climb in the previous month.** Canadian starts were up 13.1%, with many provinces posting double-digit growth. PEI (+75.0%) and Newfoundland (+72.2%) recorded the most substantial rises, but a 51.7% upsurge in Ontario had the biggest impact on the national increase. Starts were off in Quebec (-1.4%), Nova Scotia (-2.9%) and Alberta (-21.0%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **The value of building permits issued in British Columbia slipped 19.0% (*seasonally adjusted*) in July, as planned spending on both residential (-7.1%) and non-residential (-37.6%) projects declined.** In Abbotsford, permits were

up 52.6%, one of the most significant increases in the country. However, Kelowna (-34.1%), Vancouver (-32.3%) and Victoria (-1.9%) all posted decreases. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in the province fell 1.2% (*seasonally adjusted*) between June and July.** Durable products continued to see-saw as producers saw shipments decline (-3.9%). The value of wood shipments (-3.8%) decreased as manufacturers continued to face low prices for softwood and other wood products. BC producers of primary (-8.0%) and fabricated (-11.2%) metals and machinery (-3.8%) also posted significant drops. Conversely, on the non-durables side, shipments of food (+1.9%) and paper (+3.0%) were notably higher than in June. Overall, non-durables shipments were up 2.1%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*



- **British Columbia's wholesalers saw sales in the province slip 0.9% (*seasonally adjusted*) to $4.3 billion in July.** Total Canadian sales were 2.3% above the June level, as strength in the other large provinces well outweighed decreases in BC and parts of Atlantic Canada. Alberta, where sales of agricultural products were high, recorded its third double-digit growth (+10.4%) of the year. In Ontario (+2.6%), sales were pushed up by strength in the automotive sector. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Sales by retailers in the province continued to seesaw in July, slipping 0.8% (*seasonally adjusted*) to $4.8 billion.** Across the country, gains in retail sales were seen in six provinces, most markedly in New Brunswick (+3.0%) and Newfoundland & Labrador (+2.2%). Other than BC, sales were off in Alberta, Manitoba (each -0.8%) and PEI (-1.0%).

Nationally, retailers saw sales inch down (-0.1%) as a decline in the automotive sector was offset by strength in five of the seven other major sectors. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **British Columbia's year-over-year inflation rate remained at 3.3% in August.** Soaring energy costs (+23.4%), particularly gasoline (+30.7%), kept the inflation rate at its highest level since March of 2003. Excluding energy, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was up 1.5% in August.

Food bills were 3.9% higher as the cost of meals at restaurants rose 2.8% and the price of groceries was up 4.5%. Shelter costs (+4.0%) were also on the rise, as prices for both owned (+2.7%) and rented (+2.1%) accommodations climbed. Increases in the cost of electricity (+4.1%), water (+9.0%), piped gas (+20.7%) and fuel oil (+40.3%) were all substantial, leaving the overall cost of household utilities significantly higher (+12.8%) than in the same month last year. On the other hand, homeowners did get some relief in the cost for household furnishings & equipment (-1.9%).

Transportation costs were up 7.4% in August, fuelled by the hike in the price of gasoline (+30.7%). The cost of operating (+16.2%), insuring (+5.2%) and maintaining (+1.6%) a vehicle more than outweighed the decreases in the cost of purchasing and leasing an automobile (-7.1%).

British Columbians were forced to dig deeper into their wallets for alcohol & tobacco products (+1.4%) as well as health & personal care (+0.7%) and education & reading (+1.4%) materials. However, prices for clothing (-1.0%), footwear (-1.8%) and recreation equipment & services (-6.5%) continued to fall. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

MONTHLY STATISTICS

	UNITS	REFERENCE PERIOD	CURRENT			MONTHLY AVERAGE YEAR-TO-DATE	
			LATEST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM LAST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO	AMOUNT	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO
PRICES							
Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	Aug '08	114.0	-0.2	3.3	112.2	2.1
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	Aug '08	114.5	-0.2	3.5	112.6	2.3
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	Aug '08	113.2	-0.1	2.9	111.6	1.7
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	Aug '08	115.6	-0.2	3.5	113.9	2.4
Consumer Price Index-USA	1982-84=100	Aug '08	219.1	-0.4	5.4	215.7	4.6
Industry Price Index-Canada	1997=100	Jul '08	123.6	0.4	6.8	119.7	2.4
LABOUR							
Unemployment Rate (SA)*-BC	Percent	Aug '08	4.3	(4.4)	(4.0)	4.3	(4.2)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-Canada	Percent	Aug '08	6.1	(6.1)	(6.0)	6.0	(6.1)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-USA	Percent	Aug '08	6.1	(5.7)	(4.7)	5.3	(4.6)
Unemployed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Aug '08	104.2	-3.1	10.5	104.6	5.6
Employed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Aug '08	2,325.1	0.0	2.6	2,317.4	2.6
Labour Force (SA)-BC	Thousand	Aug '08	2,429.3	-0.1	2.9	2,422.0	2.8
Participation Rate (SA)-BC	Percent	Aug '08	66.5	(66.7)	(66.0)	66.7	(66.2)
Regular EI Benefits Paid	$Million	Jul '08	54.0	-15.0	4.9	66.6	9.3
Regular EI Beneficiaries	Persons	Jul '08	42,940	18.0	10.4	44,999	4.7
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	Aug '08	777.68	-1.3	2.8	774.77	4.0
Wages and Salaries-BC (SA)	$Million	Jun '08	7,661.9	0.1	5.5	7,606.3	6.7
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC	1996=100	Jun '08	120.1	0.5	2.8	120.2	3.7
PRODUCTION - BC							
Lumber-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Jun '08	2,319.4	2.2	-28.1	2,494.3	-24.8
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Jul '08	382	17.5	-9.5	366	-8.2
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Jul '08	51	-12.1	-34.6	53	-34.6
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Jul '08	157	0.0	0.6	160	1.2
Coal-Tonnes	Thousand	Jun '08	2,408.0	-5.6	3.8	2,341.0	9.6
Oil-Cubic Metres	Thousand	May '08	111.5	-3.0	-20.3	114.2	-15.2
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres	Million	Feb '08	2,461.2	-14.4	0.6	2,667.8	4.7
Electric Power Generated	GW.h	Jun '08	4,376.9	-7.1	-18.9	5,439.4	-6.2
Manufacturing Shipments (SA)	$Million	Jul '08	3,306.2	-1.2	-9.5	3,366.7	-7.7
GENERAL							
Housing Starts-All Areas BC(SAAR)**	Thousand	Aug '08	33.5	-10.2	-12.5	37.8	1.0
Housing Starts-USA (SAAR)**	Thousand	Aug '08	895.0	-6.2	-33.1	1,010.0	-29.4
Building Permits-BC (SA)	$Million	Jul '08	860.7	-19.0	-15.3	976.8	-9.7
Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Jul '08	601.0	-7.1	-18.6	665.0	-8.8
Non-Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Jul '08	259.6	-37.6	-6.6	311.9	-11.4
Retail Sales (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Jul '08	4,803.8	-0.8	1.9	4,791.0	2.9
Wholesale Trade (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Jul '08	4,339.8	-0.9	-5.9	4,366.0	-2.3
Tourism Room Revenues (SA)-BC	$Thousand	Apr '08	166,743	-0.2	2.1	168,201	3.6
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Jul '08	40	21.2	11.1	35	-14.2
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Jul '08	599	9.7	13.9	562	-3.0
Incorporations-BC	Number	May '08	2,508	-8.2	-13.1	2,543	-2.3
Exports Originating in BC (SA)	$Million	Jul '08	2,830.3	-3.1	7.8	2,669.4	-2.6

September 25, 2008

*SA indicates seasonal adjustment.

**SAAR indicates seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Brackets () indicate that rates are shown instead of percentage changes.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

	UNITS	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
		2007	2006	2005	2004	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
PRICES								
Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	110.0	108.1	106.3	104.2	1.8	1.7	2.0
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	110.2	108.0	106.0	104.0	2.0	1.9	1.9
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	109.8	108.5	106.9	104.6	1.2	1.5	2.2
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	111.5	109.1	107.0	104.7	2.2	2.0	2.2
Consumer Price Index-USA*	1982-84=100	207.3	201.6	195.3	188.9	2.9	3.2	3.4
Industry Price Index-Canada*	1997=100	115.6	113.8	111.2	109.5	1.6	2.3	1.6
LABOUR								
Unemployment Rate-BC	Percent	4.2	4.8	5.9	7.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-Canada	Percent	6.0	6.3	6.8	7.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-USA*	Percent	4.6	4.6	5.1	5.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployed-BC	Thousand	100.0	109.6	132.9	159.2	-8.8	-17.5	-16.5
Employed-BC	Thousand	2,266.3	2,195.5	2,130.5	2,062.7	3.2	3.1	3.3
Labour Force-BC	Thousand	2,366.4	2,305.1	2,263.4	2,221.9	2.7	1.8	1.9
Participation Rate-BC	Percent	66.3	65.7	65.6	65.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	1,562.7	1,564.2	1,650.3	1,764.0	-0.1	-5.2	-6.4
Regular EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	694.3	723.7	837.4	960.4	-4.1	-13.6	-12.8
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	747.84	726.02	704.49	686.74	3.0	3.1	2.6
Wages and Salaries-BC*	$Million	86,841.2	81,623.0	74,454.9	69,606.6	6.4	9.6	7.0
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC*	1996=100	116.8	112.8	109.0	106.2	3.5	3.5	2.6
PRODUCTION - BC								
Lumber-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	36,677.3	41,050.7	41,012.9	39,879.3	-10.7	0.1	2.8
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	4,717	4,736	4,932	4,724	-0.4	-4.0	4.4
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	846	1,059	1,076	1,135	-20.1	-1.6	-5.2
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	1,917	1,960	1,877	1,841	-2.2	4.4	2.0
Coal-Tonnes*	Thousand	25,941.0	23,161.0	26,718.0	27,313.0	12.0	-13.3	-2.2
Oil-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	1,529.2	1,670.6	1,765.7	2,019.0	-8.5	-5.4	-12.5
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres*	Million	31,658.2	35,291.7	31,892.8	31,201.3	-10.3	10.7	2.2
Electric Power Generated*	GW.h	72,213.3	62,021.4	67,811.2	60,495.6	16.4	-8.5	12.1
Solid Mineral Shipments	$Million	5,671.6	5,990.6	4,924.8	3,674.5	-5.3	21.6	34.0
Farm Cash Receipts**	$Million	2,399.2	2,311.1	2,405.2	2,403.1	3.8	-3.9	0.1
Manufacturing Shipments*	$Million	42,929.5	44,943.9	42,983.8	41,630.2	-4.5	4.6	3.3
GENERAL								
Housing Starts-All Areas BC**	Thousand	39.2	36.4	34.7	32.9	7.6	5.1	5.3
Housing Starts-USA	Thousand	1,355.0	1,800.9	2,068.3	1,955.8	-24.8	-12.9	5.8
Building Permits-BC*	$Million	12,544.7	11,541.5	10,182.9	7,938.7	8.7	13.3	28.3
Residential-BC*	$Million	8,611.7	7,620.7	6,970.8	5,868.9	13.0	9.3	18.8
Non-Residential-BC*	$Million	3,933.0	3,920.8	3,212.1	2,069.8	0.3	22.1	55.2
Retail Sales (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	56,365.4	52,837.1	49,286.3	47,216.6	6.7	7.2	4.4
Wholesale Trade (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	53,547.7	49,328.3	45,447.4	42,364.8	8.6	8.5	7.3
Tourism Room Revenues-BC*	$Thousand	1,967.9	1,815.3	1,688.3	1,591.0	8.4	7.5	6.1
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	470	587	786	922	-19.9	-25.3	-14.8
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	6,650	7,021	8,173	8,378	-5.3	-14.1	-2.4
Incorporations-BC*	Number	30,841	30,667	28,593	25,428	0.6	7.3	12.4
Exports Originating in BC*	$Million	31,580.0	33,468.2	34,167.3	31,007.8	-5.6	-2.0	10.2
Capital Expenditures-BC	$Million	42,086.1	39,912.2	33,254.2	29,664.7	5.4	20.0	12.1
Population-BC (as of July 1)	Number	4,380,256	4,320,255	4,260,246	4,203,807	1.4	1.4	1.3

* derived from monthly figures

**derived from quarterly figures

dash (-) indicates not available

n/a = not applicable

September 25, 2008

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
	2007	2006	2005	2004	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
BRITISH COLUMBIA (Millions $Cdn) *April 2008*							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	190,214	180,328	169,404	157,365	5.5	6.4	7.7
Real Gross Domestic Product **(chained 2002 $)**	163,200	158,335	153,208	146,629	3.1	3.3	4.5
CANADA (Millions $Cdn) *April 2008*							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	1,531,427	1,446,307	1,375,080	1,290,828	5.9	5.2	6.5
Real GDP at Market Prices **(chained 2002 $)**	1,316,219	1,282,204	1,247,780	1,210,656	2.7	2.8	3.1
UNITED STATES (Billions $US) **							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	13,807.5	13,178.4	12,421.9	11,685.9	4.8	6.1	6.3
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2000 $US)	11,523.9	11,294.8	10,989.5	10,675.8	2.0	2.8	2.9

*** US Department of Commerce (actual) July 2008*

INTEREST AND EXCHANGE RATES

(Source: Bank of Canada)

	Sept. 24/08	Sept. 17/08	Aug. 27/08	Sept. 26/07
	PERCENT PER ANNUM			
CANADA				
Prime Business Rate	4.75	4.75	4.75	6.25
Bank Rate	3.25	3.25	3.25	4.75
Marketable Government Bond Rate (over 10 years)	4.14	3.95	4.02	4.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 Year	6.65	6.65	6.65	7.05
- 5 Years	6.85	6.85	6.85	7.19
UNITED STATES				
Prime Rate	5.00	5.00	5.00	7.75
EXCHANGE RATES	AVERAGE NOON SPOT RATE			
US Dollar	1.0351	1.0783	1.0486	1.0048
Japanese Yen	0.0098	0.0103	0.0096	0.0087
UK Pound Sterling	1.9148	1.9292	1.9207	2.0255
European Euro	1.5168	1.5240	1.5397	1.4193

FORECASTS

	Real GDP		Unemployment Rate		Consumer Price Index	
	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
	% Change	*% Change*	*%*	*%*	*% Change*	*% Change*
BRITISH COLUMBIA						
BC Government (September 2008, 1st Quarterly Rpt)	1.7	2.3	4.4	4.4	2.2	2.0
Credit Union Central BC (August 2008)	1.5	1.8	4.6	4.8	2.2	1.6
Conference Board of Canada (July 18, 2008)	2.2	2.9	4.4	4.2	2.2	2.5
Scotia Bank Group (September 10, 2008)	2.1	2.7	4.4	4.2	-	-
TD Bank (April 16, 2008)	2.2	2.7	4.2	4.9	1.2	1.7
CIBC WM Economics (June 12, 2008)	2.3	2.8	4.5	4.2	2.1	3.4
Global Insight (July 2008)	2.2	2.8	4.3	4.4	2.6	2.3
CANADA						
TD Bank (June 18, 2008)	1.0	1.8	6.1	6.6	2.3	2.1
CIBC WM Economics (September 23, 2008)	0.6	1.3	6.1	6.4	2.5	3.3
Global Insight (September 2008)	0.8	1.7	6.1	6.2	2.7	2.4
UNITED STATES						
TD Bank (June 18, 2008)	1.4	1.2	5.4	6.2	4.2	2.5
CIBC WM Economics (September 23, 2008)	1.6	1.9	5.6	6.2	4.8	5.1
Global Insight (September 2008)	1.8	1.0	5.4	6.1	4.6	2.5

dash (-) indicates not available